

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 370
By Hackworth

A RESOLUTION to honor and applaud Herb Miller for his active preservation of music history through his renowned clawhammer-style banjo playing.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who, through their extraordinary efforts, have helped to preserve the culture and heritage of an entire people, showing uncommon devotion and enthusiasm to a people of historical and cultural importance; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is clawhammer banjo player, Herb Miller, who has dedicated his life to preserving Appalachian and American history so that this unique culture may inform and entertain generations to come; and

WHEREAS, originally imported with African slaves, the banjo continued to be played as a source of entertainment and enjoyment in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, eventually, in the early 1800's, a few whites learned to play, such as the notable Joel Walker Sweeney, who learned the instrument from the people working on his father's farm; and

WHEREAS, as was the standard for the Africans of the day, Mr. Sweeney played in a style that is similar to what is known today as "clawhammer," which is a very rhythmic way of playing achieved by striking down on the strings with the nail of one of the fingers and plucking back up with the thumb; and

WHEREAS, as the Civil War rolled around, some musicians turned away from the old style of playing and started finger-picking the banjo, and this style gained great popularity rather quickly; interestingly, the people isolated in the Appalachian Mountains were not privy to this

new technique and, as a result, we still today have the old African style of playing represented in clawhammer; and

WHEREAS, Herb Miller, a motivated and ambitious individual, holds the strong conviction that the true breed of diminishing mountain folk of Southern Appalachia are among the most admirable people in the world, believing that as a people they are kind, gentle, and compassionate, yet tough and resourceful; and

WHEREAS, it is through the efforts of those such as Herb Miller that the preservation of Appalachian music and culture does occur; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable playing career, Mr. Miller has demonstrated the utmost creativity, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his audiences, colleagues, and the public; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Miller for his dedication to the conservation of music and Appalachian history; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and applaud Herb Miller on his hard work and diligence in preserving the unique and wonderful culture that is Appalachia through the his play and performance of the clawhammer banjo, and offer our thanks for enabling so many to be enriched by the observation of the history and founding fabric of this great State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.